



## Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 16 May 2023

### End of Year Review 2022/23

<b>Purpose:</b>	Being the last scheduled Committee meeting of the 2022/23 Council year, this report is to help Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• look back at the work done this year</li><li>• reflect on the experience</li><li>• look forward to the new Council year, and work programme</li></ul>
<b>Content:</b>	The agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 is described and reviewed. The work completed by the Committee over the past year is attached together with a summary of the established Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• consider progress, achievements, and the effectiveness of the Scrutiny Work Programme, and Scrutiny practice</li><li>• consider how well the Committee has worked this year</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor(s):</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer(s):</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
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#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's Scrutiny Work Programme, and managing the overall work of Scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.

- 1.2 It is good practice at the end of each Council year for the Committee to look back on the year's work and consider its effectiveness. This report is to help Councillors take stock of the work done this year and reflect on the experience, to inform practice and priorities for the coming year.

## **2. Scrutiny Arrangements**

- 2.1 The broad aim of the Scrutiny function is to engage non-executive Councillors in activities to:

- provide an effective challenge to the executive
- help improve services, policies, and performance
- engage the public in its work

- 2.2 Current Scrutiny arrangements, agreed by Council in October 2012, aimed to achieve the following:

- All work to be managed by a single Scrutiny Programme Committee through a single work plan. This will ensure that work is cross cutting and not restricted to departmental silos.
- Specific work will be undertaken both through the Committee and by establishing informal Panels (for in-depth activities) or Working Groups.
- The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee shall maintain overall responsibility for the work and timetable for Scrutiny, and ensuring that the work is carried out, in conjunction with the Committee itself.
- All backbench Councillors should have the opportunity to participate in Scrutiny work regardless of Committee membership.

## **3. Work Planning**

- 3.1 The Committee has needed to ensure that the work of Scrutiny is:

- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available
- relevant to Council priorities
- adding value and having maximum impact
- coordinated and avoids duplication

- 3.2 A Scrutiny Work Planning Conference was held on 27 June 2022 which informed the Committee's agreement of a work programme for 2022/23.

- 3.3 Work planning helped guide what topics scrutiny should focus on, considering whether anything important was missing from the existing plan / current thinking, aligning scrutiny with corporate priorities and strategic challenges, thinking about community concerns, and achieving a balance of scrutiny across all Cabinet portfolios. Decisions by the Committee were guided by the overriding principles that:

- the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant
- focussed on issues of concern, and
- represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

3.4 The Scrutiny Working Programme includes topics looked at by the Committee itself, or examined through various Panels and Working Groups, with activities prioritised, aligned with available scrutiny time and resources, to sharpen focus on the quality of scrutiny and impact. The work programme for 2022/23, which was agreed by the Committee in July 2022 taking into account Conference feedback, is shown at **Appendix 1**.

3.5 Non-executive councillors who are not members of the Committee were given the opportunity to participate in Panels and other informal task and finish groups. New Scrutiny topics, once agreed, were advertised to all non-executive Councillors and expressions of interest sought. The membership of Panels and Working Groups were then determined by the Committee.

#### **4. Summary of Work Completed**

4.1 The work of Scrutiny has been carried out primarily in three ways – through the Committee itself and by establishing informal Panels (for in-depth activities) or one-off Working Groups, engaging, at a minimum, with Cabinet Members and Council officers to explore issues of concern.

##### **4.1.1 Formal Committee Meetings**

4.1.2 A report was provided to each meeting to enable the Committee to maintain an overview of agreed Scrutiny activities (including the work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups established), monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.

4.1.3 As well as developing and managing the overall work programme and keeping an oversight on all Scrutiny activities, a range of service / policy issues have been discussed by the Committee. This has resulted in the Committee communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement through ‘chair’s letters’ to Cabinet Members. A copy of this year’s completed Committee work plan is attached as **Appendix 2**.

4.1.4 The work can be summarised as follows:

- **Cabinet Member Questioning Sessions / Discussion on Specific Cabinet Portfolio Responsibilities**

A session with the Leader of the Council was held in January 2023. This enabled the Committee to hold the Leader to account and explore his work, looking at priorities, actions, achievements and impact. The Committee focussed their questions mainly on

development and regeneration activity, including the Swansea Bay City Deal.

As well as an overall Q & A Session with the Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, the Committee questioned other Cabinet Members on specific portfolio responsibilities, with discussion on:

- Archives / Community Hub
- Fly Tipping
- Homelessness
- Houses in Multiple Occupation

- **Public Services Board**

The Committee is responsible for scrutinizing the performance of Swansea Public Services Board (PSB) and how it is making a difference. This was discussed during meetings held in October 2022 and February 2023. In October, as part of the ongoing scrutiny, the Committee considered the PSB Annual Report 2021/22 in relation to overall progress and performance of the PSB. It also considered information on work being done to improve the PSB's performance framework (following issue raised by the Committee); the new Assessment of Local Well-being (published in May 2022), and the development of a new Local Well-being Plan. In February, the Committee was formally consulted on the Draft PSB Local Well-being Plan, which must be in place by May 2023. It also followed up on issues arising from previous scrutiny sessions, and action taken. The Committee has continued to make suggestions to challenge improvement, including around visibility, the measuring and reporting of performance against objectives and impact, and public engagement. The Committee will follow up on the development of the Well-being Plan at the next PSB Scrutiny session, around August 2023, when it hopes to be able to see the associated action plan and how performance against the Plan will be measured.

- **Crime & Disorder Scrutiny - Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership**

The Committee is the authority's designated Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee. In discharging this role, the Committee held its annual session in April 2023 focusing on the performance of the Safer Swansea Partnership, looking at partnership priorities, activities, and impact. Lead representatives from both South Wales Police and the Council, who are involved in the joint-chairing arrangement for the Safer Swansea Partnership Steering Group, attended to present information and take questions on the work of the Safer Swansea Partnership. This included questions on Governance and Leadership, Resources, the Evening & Night-Time Economy, the Mayhill disturbance and partnership / policing review,

Hate Crime reporting and monitoring, Community Integration and Cohesion, Anti-Social Behaviour (off-road bikes), dealing with Sexual Offences / Rape, Substance Misuse, Community Engagement and Co-production, and new Partnership Community Safety Priorities for 2023-26.

- **Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report**

The Committee annually monitors and challenges Council action in relation to Corporate Safeguarding, given safeguarding is one of the Council's top priorities, and enabled Committee members to comment on progress, achievements, and implementation of policy. This took place in November 2022. Questions were asked about: Working with Contractors and Suppliers, and compliance with Safeguarding Policies; Mandatory Training Provision and Compliance; the Disclosure and Barring Service; and Advocacy.

- **Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty**

Ensuring that all Council Priorities are sufficiently covered within the Scrutiny Work Programme, the Committee is annually monitoring the delivery of the Corporate Priority on Tackling Poverty, to keep close watch on progress, follow up on issues raised, and enable scrutiny views to influence action and improvement. A report was provided the Committee with information on progress over the last 12 months. It presented evidence, insights and intelligence that demonstrated the contributions that have been made in delivering this Council priority, as well as future plans. It covered current challenges, including the impact of the cost of living crisis, and the Council's response. The report also considered the findings and recommendations of Audit Wales' 'Time for Change – Poverty in Wales' Report, published in November 2022, showing the Authority's response to the Audit recommendations, and planned action. This led to questions and discussion including exploration of the level of resources to tackle poverty in Swansea and meet corporate objective, and, how in addition to a dedicated Tackling Poverty Service, this is embedded across the Council, with all departments playing a role, and partnership arrangements helping the Council to deliver on objectives. The Committee also followed up on concerns from last year's session about efforts to improve employability and skills, and tackle barriers including access to public and personal transport. It heard about the various education, training and employment programmes, and initiatives and successes, including from Communities for Work, Workways+, Pathways to Work, Beyond Bricks & Mortar, and the opening of a 'pop-up' Employment Hub within the Quadrant Shopping Centre. There was also discussion about the links between poverty and mental health, the mental health support available from partners and joint working between teams.

- **Follow Up on Workforce Scrutiny Working Group Recommendations**

The Committee takes responsibility for following up on previous Scrutiny Working Groups, to check on progress with the topic / issue(s) and response to any specific suggestions or recommendations made and agreed action coming out of the scrutiny session. The Committee received an update on action following the Workforce Scrutiny Working Group, which concluded in February 2022, enabling the Committee to consider progress against recommended improvement and highlight issues where further action may be required. A comprehensive report on progress since the Working Group, was provided including update on issues raised by the Working Group, informing of actions taken in the delivery of work and achievements on Workforce, which were discussed. The Committee heard about key developments including recent agreement by Cabinet of a Post Pandemic Working Model (and seven agreed principles), and Workforce Strategy 2022-27, which now provided a longer-term picture and clearer focus on workforce priorities. The Committee agreed that there should be clarity around standards and expectations regarding future working and customer contact, given there is now an established mix of office and home working across the organisation. The latest position was also provided on wellbeing and sickness absence, agency workers including improvement actions taken, HR and Service Centre operations, Headcount/FTE, and Occupational Health Data. The Committee asked about the uptake of wellbeing / mental health training by staff.

- **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications, the Committee carries out pre-decision scrutiny, unless delegated to relevant Panels. Three Cabinet reports were subject to pre-decision scrutiny:

<b>Report</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>	<b>Undertaken by</b>
<b>Oracle Project Investment Update</b>	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader) & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	20 Oct 2022	Committee
<b>Annual Budget</b>	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	14 Feb 2023	Service Improvement & Finance Panel (with contribution from other Panels)
<b>National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit</b>	Environment & Infrastructure	23 Mar 2023	Committee

- Call-in of Cabinet decisions – None

- Referrals from Council (or other bodies) – None

Other Reports discussed:

- Scrutiny Annual Report for 2021/22 (reported to Council 1 Sep 2022)
- Scrutiny Performance Panel conveners provided progress reports on the work and impact of their Panels
- Co-ordination with the Governance & Audit Committee – Discussion between Chairs / Committees on the Audit / Scrutiny Relationship:

Although Scrutiny and Audit have distinctive roles, there are common aims in terms of good governance, improvement in performance and culture, and financial management, and so a regular conversation is held which helps to ensure we are working together effectively. The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee addressed the Governance & Audit Committee on this in October 2022 and the Committee also heard from Paula O'Connor, Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee, at the Scrutiny Programme Committee in March 2023. This has made sure there is good awareness of each other's work, avoiding duplication and gaps in work programmes, and the ability to refer issues between Committees.

#### 4.2.1 Informal Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

4.2.2 A number of Scrutiny Panels were established to carry out in-depth inquiries or undertake in-depth monitoring of particular services.

- a) Inquiry Panels: to undertake discrete in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis. These would be significant topics where scrutiny can make a real difference. Inquiry panels are expected to take no longer than six months to complete and would produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered.

The following Inquiry Panel commenced in November 2022 and is scheduled to be complete by September 2023.

Inquiry	Status
<p><b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b> (convener: Cllr Terry Hennegan): How can the Council ensure that it is working with its partners to appropriately and effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?</p>	<p>Evidence Gathering / Consultation</p> <p>Final Report planned for presentation to Scrutiny Programme Committee in October 2023 - to agree submission to Cabinet for decision</p>

**Follow up of Previous Scrutiny Inquiries** – Inquiry Panels reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and cabinet action plans, and the impact of their work. A meeting will usually be held around 6-12 months following cabinet decision, with a further follow up arranged if required. The following previous scrutiny inquiry is due for follow up:

<b>Inquiry</b>	<b>Monitoring Status</b>
<b>Procurement</b> (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)	Follow Up Meeting – 24 October 2023

- b) Performance Panels: to provide in-depth monitoring and challenge for clearly defined service areas. Performance Panels are expected to have on-going correspondence with relevant Cabinet Members in order to share views and recommendations, arising from monitoring activities, about services. Performance Panel conveners provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

<b>Performance Panel</b>	<b>Convener*</b>
<b>Service Improvement &amp; Finance</b> (monthly)	Cllr Chris Holley
<b>Education</b> (monthly)	Cllr Lyndon Jones
<b>Adult Services</b> (6-weekly)	Cllr Susan Jones
<b>Child &amp; Family Services</b> (6-weekly)	Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams
<b>Development &amp; Regeneration</b> (every two months)	Cllr Chris Holley
<b>Climate Change &amp; Nature</b> (every two months) In July 2022 the Committee agreed to rename the 'Natural Environment' Panel to 'Climate Change & Nature', reflecting recent change in corporate priorities.	Cllr Hannah Lawson

- 4.2.3 Working Groups - Although the majority of Scrutiny work would be carried out through the Committee and Panels, the Committee can also establish informal Working Groups of Councillors. This has supported flexible working where it is considered that a matter should be carried out outside of the Committee but does not necessitate the establishment of a Panel. This method of working is intended to be light-touch – effectively a one-off focused meeting to consider a specific report or information, resulting in a letter (or report) to the relevant Cabinet Member(s) with views and recommendations.

Four one-off Working Groups were included in the 2022/23 work programme, two of which were completed.



- **Road Safety** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

Completed in December 2022. This Working Group enabled information, focussed questioning & discussion to understand the Council's role and responsibilities on road safety, e.g., asking about hot spots; work to improve safety; preventative measures; speed controls – use of signs / humps / cameras; proposed new 20mph limits; condition of roads; safety of cyclists & pedestrians; partnership working, etc. A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations was sent to the Cabinet Member and response received. This was reported to the Committee on 14 February and the Committee will be responsible for follow up in the next 12 months.

- **Co-production** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

Completed in March 2023. It enabled information, focussed questioning & discussion on the development of Co-production in the Council and progress in helping to improve involvement and engagement with service users, partners, and the public in the design & delivery of services & decision-making, etc. A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations was sent to the Cabinet Member and response received. This was reported to the Committee on 16 May and the Committee will be responsible for follow up in the next 12 months.

- **Customer Contact** (convener: Cllr Rebecca Fogarty)

To be arranged. This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion on the user experience when contacting the Council / accessing services whether by telephone or on-line / through digital means; provision for offline and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc.

d) **Healthy City** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

To be arranged. This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion exploring the Healthy City Partnership, key activities and achievements, work in relation to health promotion, particularly physical activities, including provision of outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.

4.2.4 **Chair's Letters** - these are an established way for Scrutiny, across all activities, to communicate findings, views and recommendations for improvement directly to Cabinet Members (and other decision-makers), reflecting discussion at meetings. Letters sent by the Committee, Inquiry Panels and Working Groups, and those by Performance Panels where action required from the Committee, and responses to letters were published within the Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda for discussion.

Response times are monitored and currently (as at 5 May) show that:

- the average response time is 20 days (against target of 21 days) – for comparison performance for whole of 2021/22 was 18 days.
- of the 18 letters which required a Cabinet Member response 72% have been responded to within time – for comparison performance during 2021/22: 71% / 24 letters.

#### **4.3.1 Scrutiny of Joint / Regional Scrutiny Bodies**

#### **4.3.2 Partneriaeth**

A Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group, comprising of Education Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs, or equivalent, across Swansea Council, Carmarthenshire Council and Pembrokeshire Councils has scrutinised the work of the new regional education partnership which supports the delivery of school improvement, and ensure greater public accountability over decisions made. Scrutiny seeks reassurance and considers if the Partnership is operating according to the Joint Committee Agreement, and its Business Plan, and is being managed effectively. The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Convener of the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel have participated in the Scrutiny of Partneriaeth. The Group meets termly, mirroring the Partneriaeth Joint Committee. Meetings took place 24 October 2022 and 13 February 2023. Next meeting planned for 19 June. As per Joint Agreement, the Swansea Scrutiny Team manages support for the Scrutiny of Partneriaeth.

#### **4.3.3 Swansea Bay City Region City Deal**

Swansea Scrutiny has also been involved in the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee, approved by Council in July 2018. This arrangement involves three councillor representatives from each of the four Councils involved in the City Region, meeting to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal programme. Swansea Scrutiny Councillor representatives are currently: Jan Curtice, Victoria Holland & Chris Holley. The Joint Scrutiny Committee is meeting every two months. Meetings took place in July, September and December 2022, and February and May 2023. As per Joint Agreement, the Scrutiny Committee is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council.

#### **4.3.4 South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

The Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) involves Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Councils, as well as Brecon Beacons and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities, and will exercise functions relating to strategic land use planning, regional transport planning and the exercise of economic well-being powers. The Committee has set up a CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee which consists of three elected members from each Council and will meet at least quarterly. The Overview & Scrutiny

Sub-Committee will scrutinise the decisions / actions of the CJC as it discharges its functions and performance in relation to policy objectives and targets. Swansea Scrutiny Councillor representatives have been: Peter Black, Wendy Lewis & Mike White. Meetings took place in November 2022, and January, February and April 2023. The Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee is being serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council.

4.3.5 A regular update on regional scrutiny activity was provided to Committee members to ensure awareness. Regional scrutiny arrangements do not, however, preclude Councillors within constituent Councils discussing the impact of the regional body on their Council and locality, and holding Cabinet Members to account for their involvement / Council's involvement and engagement in regional bodies, and relevant local decision-making.

4.4 **Appendix 3a** provides a timetable of all scrutiny activities carried out in 2022/23. Lead councillors and officers are also noted within. Also provided as **Appendix 3b** is a snapshot of progress with all Panels and Working Groups, as well as Regional Scrutiny, and their current position.

4.5 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal Panels and Working Groups these meetings have been accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the Committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

## 5. **Public Requests for Scrutiny / Public Engagement**

5.1 Members of the public are able to make requests for scrutiny by contacting the Chair or Scrutiny Team in writing detailing the issue of concern, its impact, and suggested action. This can be via the Council's website: [www.swansea.gov.uk/raiseanissuetoscrutiny](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/raiseanissuetoscrutiny) or email to [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk). Individual Councillors (who are not members of the Committee) may also raise issues for Scrutiny in-year.

5.2 Also, Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA) specifically enable Councillors to refer issues of local importance to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, however as a means of "last resort" in a broad sense, with issues being raised at a Scrutiny Committee after other avenues have been explored.

5.3 In accordance with agreed protocols, the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee is required to consider any requests received and bring about a proposal about how to deal with these to the Committee for consideration. Taking into account relevant advice, any such issues may merit inclusion in the work programme, referral elsewhere, or no action.

#### 5.4 Summary of activity over the year, to date:

- Two public / councillor requests for scrutiny was received:
  - An issue for Scrutiny was received relating to the monitoring of action and performance in relation to the Council's Corporate Well-being Objective 'Delivering on Nature Recovery and Climate Change', including Council response to recent Audit Wales report on 'Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030'. As this issue was already included within the Scrutiny Work Programme, the member of the public was signposted to the work of the Climate Change & Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel, which undertakes in-depth and ongoing monitoring of the Council's plans, performance, and achievements, and there was opportunity to engage with that Panel. Furthermore, the Panel has reviewed the Council's response to the Audit Wales report on 'Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030', and this information was shared with the member of the public. The member of the public raised a specific point about public information (the need for up-to-date real time data / dashboard for citizens to monitor, view and digest Councils efforts, etc) and the lead Cabinet Member, Councillor Andrea Lewis (Cabinet Member for Service Transformation / Deputy Leader), has responded to the member of the public on this.
  - An issue for Scrutiny was also been raised regarding the Council's assessment of HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) applications. As the topic of HMOs was subject of discussion at the Committee meeting in February, the member of the public was invited to submit question(s) that can be put to the lead Cabinet Member and they took the opportunity to raise questions under Public Question Time.

(NOTE: in addition to public requests for Scrutiny formally reported to the Committee, members of the public are able to contact Scrutiny with questions for Cabinet Members. If these relate to planned Scrutiny activity they are fed into specific meetings. Where they do not, questions are forwarded to relevant Cabinet Members for direct response. This process is monitored by the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee to ensure Cabinet Members are responsive to public questions.)

- On two out of ten occasions, questions were formally submitted by members of the public to the Committee, as part of Public Question Time. These related to the discussion with Cabinet Members on Archives Service / Community Hub development, and Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- As video of Committee meetings are published on-line we can see on average meetings are generating around 40 views (YouTube). The most watched were the discussion with Cabinet Member on Community Hubs / Archives Service in August 2022 (67 views), and meeting in February 2023 on Houses in Multiple Occupation (53

views), and the meeting in March 2023 on Pre-decision Scrutiny of report on the 20mph national default speed limit (56 views).

- 60% of Committee meeting agendas included some form of public input (this includes questions being asked during Public Question Time at two meetings)
- 50% of Committee meetings generated media coverage (this related to the discussion within meetings on: Archives / Community Hub development; Oracle Project Investment Update; Fly Tipping, Homelessness; and 20mph National Default Speed Limit)

## 6. The Scrutiny Experience / Improvement & Development

6.1 At the conclusion of the year's work it is good practice to reflect on achievements and issues that have arisen. Committee members are encouraged to share their views on how their experience has been (positive and negative), and whether there are aspects of scrutiny practice / process that could be improved.

6.2 The following questions may be worth considering:

- Have things worked well within the Committee over the past year?
- Has the Committee's work and overall work programme focused on the right things?
- What, if anything, could be done better?
- What have we learnt that will help us to improve and develop future scrutiny?

6.3 A range of relevant statistics about Scrutiny activity, covering the last year, are attached as **Appendix 4** to help the Committee consider, to some degree, the performance of scrutiny. For example, Councillor attendance at the Committee (not including co-optees) is 89% across ten meetings held to date this year, against an overall average of 74% across all Scrutiny meetings.

6.4 We are also now inviting post-meeting feedback from Cabinet Members and officers who have participated in Scrutiny meetings, about their experience and satisfaction. They are invited to complete a short anonymous survey shortly after each Scrutiny meeting, to help us to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of scrutiny practice and inform the improvement and development of scrutiny in Swansea. During 2022/23, to date, this has generated 40 responses.

6.4.1 Drawing some headlines from the responses, the feedback indicates:

- The purpose of Scrutiny meetings has been clear, with topics of discussion being significant and important.
- Those attending meetings have felt well supported in the process of Scrutiny and treated well, with the experience being overwhelmingly positive.
- Scrutiny meetings have been chaired effectively.

- Those carrying out Scrutiny have been focused on the topic(s) and asked pertinent questions, with discussion / debate being fair and balanced.
- Scrutiny meetings have been useful and constructive.

Some improvement suggestions:

- With hybrid meetings it is useful when the Chair says who is in the physical room, as it is unclear from the cameras to those participating online.
- Being careful not to stray into personal / ward specific issues during Scrutiny.

6.5 In order to strengthen end of year review / evaluation efforts, a Councillor Survey was issued to all Councillors in April inviting views about the way Scrutiny has worked over the last year, so that we can monitor the effectiveness of Scrutiny, get a better indication of satisfaction, and address any areas for improvement. The survey also provided an opportunity to input ideas for future Scrutiny topics, which will be fed into the next Scrutiny Work Planning Conference.

Survey results, once analysed, will be reported in the Scrutiny Annual Report indicating, for example, the extent to which people feel that:

- They have a good understanding of the role of Scrutiny.
- Scrutiny is operating well in Swansea.
- Non-executive members have good opportunities to participate in Scrutiny.
- The Scrutiny Work Programme balances issues of strategic importance with community concerns.
- Scrutiny activities are well-planned.
- Scrutiny provides regular challenge to decision-makers.
- Scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council; and,
- The level of support and guidance provided by the Scrutiny Team is either excellent or very good.

6.6 Committee members are encouraged to reflect on the work of the Committee and work programme, and identify any improvement and development issues. Based on self-evaluation and reflection, the Committee can consider whether, and what, action should be taken to improve Scrutiny.

6.7 All Scrutiny Performance Panels have also been invited to reflect on their work and observations that may inform future Scrutiny and its effectiveness.

6.8 Committee members will be aware that a number of Scrutiny improvement objectives and action plan were agreed by the Committee in January 2019. This included actions to address the three proposals for improvement made by the Wales Audit Office following its review of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements in 2018. The Committee has

regularly reviewed and considered progress against the action plan, last in March 2022. The review of the current improvement plan showed only one outstanding action:

- Development and delivery of a Scrutiny training and development programme (as suggested by Audit Wales)  
MAY 2023 UPDATE: this is currently being explored, with a view to delivery early in the new municipal year. Councillors have been surveyed on training development topics that will help inform the programme.

## **7. Scrutiny Annual Report**

- 7.1 The key achievements from the Scrutiny work carried out over the past year and its impact will be featured in the Scrutiny Annual Report which will be published in the next few months and presented to Council.

## **8. Developing the Work Programme for 2023/24**

- 8.1 A Work Planning Conference will take place in the new municipal year that will help the Committee to consider and identify priorities for Scrutiny for the coming year. Consistent with previous arrangements, the Conference can take place on Tuesday 13 June at 4pm at the Guildhall, in place of the scheduled Committee meeting. All Scrutiny Councillors will be invited to participate in this. As well as new topics the work programme will need to consider the continuation of some current activities because of their importance or because work may be incomplete, as well as suggestions that have already been made during the last year about future work.

- 8.2 The following work will therefore need to be considered when discussing a new Scrutiny Work Programme:

- Inquiry Panels (in progress)

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Any new Inquiry topic that is agreed will be able to commence, following the conclusion of the Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry, later in the year.

- Follow up of Previous Scrutiny Inquiries
  - **Procurement** (*meeting planned for 24 October*)
- Performance Panels

Unless the Committee makes changes, it is assumed that all Performance Panels would continue as already agreed:

- **Service Improvement & Finance**
- **Education**
- **Child & Family Services**
- **Adult Services**
- **Development & Regeneration**
- **Climate Change & Nature**

- Working Groups

- **Customer Contact** (*planned but not completed - to incorporate discussion on digital inclusion*)

This was delayed given the attention being given to the implementation of the new Oracle Fusion system. The Working Group should be able to meet early in the new municipal year when relevant officers are in better position to support, provide information, and facilitate questions / discussion.

- **Healthy City**

We have been advised that work is currently on hold - the Partnership, which is led by the Local Health Board, has not met since before the pandemic. Therefore, this Working Group could be replaced in the next year's work programme, but revisited in the future at the appropriate time.

Follow Up on previous Working Groups – to be carried out by the Committee:

- **Bus Services**
- **Road Safety**
- **Co-production**

- **Regional Scrutiny**

The Council is already committed to participation in the following which will continue during 2023/24:

- Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee
- South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Partneriaeth Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group

8.3 The Committee is welcome to share ideas about any other topics that might need to be looked at by Scrutiny in future, ahead of the Work Planning Conference.



- 8.4 Following the Scrutiny Working Planning Conference in June, the first Scrutiny Programme Committee of the new municipal year will take place in July. At this meeting the Committee will be asked to discuss and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24. The Committee can then keep priorities under constant review and make changes as necessary. The Committee will always retain the flexibility to adapt and re-prioritise the work of scrutiny in response to changing circumstances and/or urgent issues which may arise in-year, to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.
- 8.5 Any new Scrutiny Work Programme will need to be aware of and avoid any issue of duplication the work plans of relevant Council bodies. This includes the Governance & Audit Committee and the Council's Corporate Delivery Committees. Any issues regarding possible overlap / duplication will need to be discussed between the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and relevant Chairs.
- 8.6 Pre-decision Scrutiny – the Committee is invited to consider the available information on future Cabinet business and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Cabinet Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 5**). Any requests will require discussion with relevant Cabinet Member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop understanding about, and ask questions on, proposed cabinet reports to provide 'critical friend' challenge and influence decision-making. This will be carried out by the Committee unless delegated to relevant Panels as appropriate. This work will need to be scheduled into respective work plans.
- 8.6.1 Pre-decision Scrutiny of the following Cabinet report has already been identified: 'FPR7 Redevelopment of 277-278 Oxford Street - Community Hub Project'. This was originally scheduled for discussion at the 16 May Committee meeting, but the Cabinet report has been delayed. Pre-decision Scrutiny will take place in accordance with the Cabinet meeting this is reported to. It is currently listed for 15 June Cabinet meeting. If that remains the case, a Special Committee meeting will be arranged, potentially immediately before the Work Planning Conference on 13 June.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

## **10. Legal Implications**

- 10.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: The Agreed Work Programme 2022/23

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee - Completed Work Plan 2022/23

Appendix 3a: Work Programme 2022/23 – Timetable of Activity

Appendix 3b: Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

Appendix 4: Scrutiny Performance Data

Appendix 5: Cabinet Forward Plan